1:Nimuendajú E-5 (1941-1942) 1952
SQ20 Tucuna SQ20

227 The javelin (ču/ĕi) is a length of canna brava some two meters long and having
[177] from four to nine points; it was formerly made of smooth wood, today it is made
of iron wire with a barbed point. The traders on the banks of the Solimões complain
[648] bitterly of the Tukuna for unceremoniously filching the wire from their fences in
order to make these spear points, but they are too unbusinesslike to order rolls of
this wire to sell retail to the Indians at a good profit.

226 The fisherman casts the javelin, holding it by its butt end. This procedure always
gave me the impression that the javelin was the weapon reproduced in the atlas of
Spix and Martius, that was formerly thrown with the *estoleca* (atlatl); but no one
remembers it today. With the javelin in the right hand,
and the paddle held close to the blade in the left hand, the
fisherman guides his canoe under the shadow of the trees,
silently and slowly.

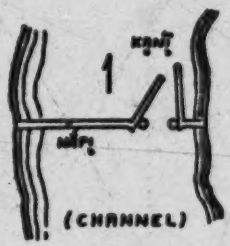

Fig. 5. Fish weir.

151 The ability of the Tukuna to discover fish in the depths
226 or at the bottom is truly extraordinary and can only be
explained by their spending almost half their time since
childhood in this activity. If, while traveling, the Indians
pass by a spot that looks promising, they constantly hurl
the javelin ahead of the canoe and retrieve it, where the
untutored eye sees no sign of fish. The children especially
may be seen fishing in this manner and in advantageous places where they do not
overlook the slightest possible chance.

226 Especially vulnerable to the javelin are the shoals of fish which swarm up the
Solimões in fantastic numbers and enter the tributaries to spawn during May and
June. In the river narrows formed by the crumbling and falling of the solid banks,
the fish crowd together in such a way that any cast will bring results.

227 Far less used for fishing than the javelin is the bow and arrow. The arrow
(na:/nẽ) is a length of canna brava, without feathering and with a barbed point,
formerly made of the bone of a sloth (*Bradypus* sp.), nowadays of iron, super-
imposed on a wooden foreshaft.

The fisherman also often takes with him a reed with a small ball of bone, wax,
or heavy wood attached to the end of the line (T., kuiⁿẽ/ǀⁿũ; l.g., *uapunga*). With
[226] the ball he strikes the surface of the water, thus imitating the fall of fruits, in order
to attract certain fish—especially *tambaquis* (*Colossoma bidens*) and *pacú* (*Myteles*
sp.)—if he does not obtain the same results by tossing the fruit itself.

The arrow harpoon (T., vjrẽẽ'nẽ; l.g., *sararáca*), which today has a barbed
iron point or, if used for turtle (*Emys tracaja*), four spikes, has been in use since
[177] ancient times, but not the long-shafted wooden harpoon which, in my opinion,
was adopted only after the Tukuna began to inhabit the banks of the Solimões.
There it is employed especially in fishing for pirarucú, the principal, and for some
of the Solimões Tukuna the only, staple food, as well as an important article of
export.

226 At the mouths of the numerous lake channels and at the dead-end arms of the
lower courses of the igarapés one almost always finds a weir, *tapagem* (na:'/pị)
constructed of bamboo strips. Where it extends close to one of the banks there is
an opening between two posts with a movable door (kɔ'nị^{a}) of paxiuba shoots tied